CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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PROHIBITION OF THE PRODUCTION OF FISSILE MATERIAL FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS OR OTHER NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE DEVICES

Statement by the Netherlands on behalf of the Western Group

1. Today I take the floor to deliver a statement on behalf of the Western Group on the issue of negotiations on a ban of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, or "Cut-off".

The Western Group has listened with great interest to the progress report just presented by the CD's Special Coordinator on Cut-off, Ambassador Shannon.

2. The Western Group would like to commend the Special Coordinator for the way he has discharged himself of the responsibilities entrusted to him in the Presidential statement of 25 January last. The Western Group is encouraged by the consensus among members that the Conference is the appropriate forum to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and by the agreement, in principle, for the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee on this item.

3. The Western Group had expected that, on the basis of the consensus on the CD as the appropriate forum, the Conference would be able to agree on a negotiating mandate and to establish an Ad Hoc Committee during its 1994 session. Most regrettably, that expectation has not been met. None the less, the Western Group continues to look forward to an early negotiation in the CD, and to that end supports the request that the Special Coordinator continue his consultations.

4. The Western Group would like to reiterate that it fully supports the original draft mandate, which is based on the wording of the United Nations General Assembly consensus resolution 48/75L. The Western Group further notes that this simple mandate enjoys the support of the preponderance of the members of the CD, and that only a handful of delegations has been unwilling to uphold the commitment embodied in the 1993 Cut-off resolution. The simple draft mandate reads as follows:

"1. The Conference on Disarmament decides to establish an Ad hoc Committee on a 'Ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices'.

2. The Conference directs the Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

3. The Ad hoc Committee will report to the Conference on Disarmament on the progress of its work before the conclusion of the 1994 session "

In the view of the Western Group, CD members should seize the unique opportunity of the consensus reached in the United Nations General Assembly to begin, as soon as possible, the negotiation of a ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

5. The Western Group expresses the hope that the Special Coordinator can successfully conclude his consultations and declares its readiness to render him every support in doing so.